

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JULY 17, 2007

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 27, 2007

AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 4, 2007

AMENDED IN SENATE MAY 1, 2007

## SENATE BILL

**No. 890**

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### **Introduced by Senator Scott**

(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Portantino)

**(Coauthors: Senators Alquist, Denham, Ducheny, Maldonado,  
Padilla, Romero, and Wyland)**

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Arambula, Beall, Berryhill, *Brownley*,  
Evans, Hancock, *Karnette*, *Mullin*, Parra, Solorio, and Torrico)

February 23, 2007

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An act to add and repeal Article 6.3 (commencing with Section 54710) of Chapter 9 of Part 29 of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education Code, relating to pupils.

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 890, as amended, Scott. Pupils: Early Commitment to College program.

Existing law requires a school district maintaining any of grades 7 to 12, inclusive, to offer to all otherwise qualified pupils in those grades a course of study fulfilling the requirements and prerequisites for admission to the California public institutions of postsecondary education and to provide a timely opportunity to each of those pupils to enroll within a 4-year period in each course necessary to fulfill those requirements and prerequisites.

Existing law authorizes a school district to apply to establish a University and College Opportunities Program with existing local or

categorical funds. The program plan developed by a school district or school is required to include, among other things, college counseling to assist pupils in preparing application forms for college admission, to procure scholarships and other financial aid, and to meet all deadlines for these programs.

This bill would establish, until January 1, ~~2018~~, 2020, the Early Commitment to College program. Participation by pupils and school districts in the program would be voluntary. *A pupil scheduled to graduate from high school after 2017 would not be allowed to participate.* The Superintendent of Public Instruction would be required, among other program duties, to designate the 30% of school districts that operate middle and high schools with the highest proportion of low-income pupils, as defined, as College Opportunity Zones. A school that is designated as a College Opportunity Zone by the Superintendent would be required to give all pupils enrolled in grades 6 to 9, inclusive, and their parent or legal guardian, or the appropriate person in the case of foster youth, the opportunity to sign a “Save Me a Spot in College” pledge developed by the Superintendent. Schools not designated as a College Opportunity Zone would be required to give pupils who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals and are enrolled in grades 6 to 9, inclusive, and their parent or legal guardian, and all foster youth and the appropriate adult responsible for that foster youth, the opportunity to sign a pledge. Participating school districts would be required to provide college information and college preparation events inclusive of pupils who sign the pledge.

The bill would provide that a pupil who signs a pledge declares a commitment to prepare for college, finish high school, and enroll in college and commits, among other things, to meet all graduation requirements, take college preparatory coursework, complete and file a free application for federal student aid, and submit his or her grade point average to the Student Aid Commission by March 2 of his or her senior year. A pupil who signs the pledge and is certified by his or her school district as having fulfilled the requirements of the pledge would be preapproved to receive, upon completion of high school, a fee waiver under the California Community College Board of Governor’s fee waiver program for 2 years of enrollment at a California community college.

The bill would encourage the California Community Colleges, the University of California, the California State University, independent colleges, the California Student Opportunity and Access Program, the

Student Aid Commission, and other nonprofit, business, or other community organizations to provide support services as needed in coordination with local school districts.

The bill would require the Superintendent to submit a recommendation to the Legislature, on or before November 1, ~~2016~~, 2018, on whether the program should be continued.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1     SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to establish a  
2     program to ensure early notification and early commitment of  
3     college opportunities for pupils in middle school and high school  
4     and their families. It is the intent of the Legislature that the program  
5     motivate pupils to stay in school, graduate from high school, take  
6     college preparatory coursework, and, if they choose to do so, seek  
7     postsecondary opportunities.

8     SEC. 2. Article 6.3 (commencing with Section 54710) is added  
9     to Chapter 9 of Part 29 of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education  
10    Code, to read:

11  
12           Article 6.3. Early Commitment to College Program  
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14     54710. The Early Commitment to College program is hereby  
15     established for the purpose of accomplishing all of the following  
16     goals:

17     (a) Increase high school completion rates, direct college-going  
18     rates, and college preparation of pupils attending schools with the  
19     greatest poverty and among low-income pupils in general.

20     (b) Motivate pupils to prepare for college by taking college  
21     preparatory coursework, which may include college preparatory  
22     and career technical classes, depending on their interest in pursuing  
23     direct university admission or specific technical education  
24     programs in community college.

25     (c) Help families understand that college is attainable and  
26     affordable, that financial aid is available, and that with the right  
27     preparation their children can go to college if they choose to do  
28     so.

(d) Provide a clear path for pupils through middle schools, high schools, community colleges, universities, and state and federal financial aid programs, thereby improving opportunity and efficiency.

(e) Strengthen the state's historic promise of college access made in the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education and express this commitment directly to middle and high school pupils and their families.

(f) Prepare the highly skilled workforce necessary to keep California's economy competitive, maintain the income and quality of life for California residents, increase tax revenues, and provide for improved civic and democratic participation.

54711. (a) (1) Participation by pupils and school districts in the Early Commitment to College program is voluntary. A school district that chooses to participate in the program is encouraged to do so districtwide, with all schools in the district participating, and shall provide schoolwide college information and college preparation events inclusive of pupils who sign the "Save Me a Spot in College" pledge. *An elementary school district may distribute the general letter signed by the Governor and the Superintendent of Public Instruction as set forth in subdivision (f) of Section 54712, but if the elementary school district chooses to participate in the program, it shall do so in collaboration with the high school district in which the predominant number of its pupils attend.*

(2) For purposes of this article, all of the following apply:

(A) "College Opportunity Zone" means the 30 percent of middle schools and high schools with the highest proportion of low-income pupils.

(B) "Low-income pupil" means a pupil who is eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

(3) Schools designated as a College Opportunity Zone, in a participating school district, shall give all pupils enrolled in grades 6 to 9, inclusive, and their parent or legal guardian, or the appropriate person in the case of foster youth, the opportunity to sign a "Save Me a Spot in College" pledge.

(4) Schools not designated as a College Opportunity Zone, in a participating school district, shall give a pupil who is eligible for free and reduced-price meals and is enrolled in grades 6 to 9, inclusive, and his or her parent or legal guardian, and all foster

1 youth and the appropriate adult responsible for that foster youth,  
2 the opportunity to sign a “Save Me a Spot in College” pledge.

3 (b) A participating school district shall certify that a pupil has  
4 completed the “Save Me a Spot in College” pledge pursuant to  
5 Section 54713 and shall track pupils enrolled in the Early  
6 Commitment to College program by recording and reporting  
7 participation data as directed by the Superintendent.

8 (c) Any school that participates in the federal free or  
9 reduced-price lunch program is encouraged to participate in the  
10 Early Commitment to College program.

11 (d) *A pupil scheduled to graduate from high school after 2017*  
12 *shall not be allowed to enroll in the program.*

13 54712. The Superintendent shall perform the following  
14 responsibilities:

15 (a) Identify schools as College Opportunity Zones.

16 (b) Develop the “Save Me a Spot in College” pledge, which  
17 shall include the commitments made by the pupil and the major  
18 postsecondary and financial aid opportunities provided by the state.

19 (c) Consult with the California Community Colleges, the  
20 University of California, the California State University, the  
21 Student Aid Commission, and independent colleges and universities  
22 in developing the pledge, letter, and supporting materials.

23 (d) Determine the form of recognition for pupils who have been  
24 certified by his or her school district as having fulfilled the  
25 requirements of the pledge pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section  
26 54711.

27 (e) Develop a method by which participating schools shall record  
28 and report participation in, and outcome data of, the Early  
29 Commitment to College program to the Superintendent pursuant  
30 to subdivision (b) of Section 54711.

31 (f) Develop a letter addressed to pupils enrolled in grades 6 to  
32 9, inclusive, and their parents or legal guardians, or the appropriate  
33 person in the case of foster youth, and signed by the Governor and  
34 the Superintendent that describes the major steps to prepare for  
35 college, including postsecondary career technical education, and  
36 the major postsecondary and financial aid opportunities available  
37 to students in California. Develop a second letter that details the  
38 Early Commitment to College program and that is directed to  
39 pupils eligible to sign the “Save Me a Spot in College” pledge as  
40 set forth in subdivision (b). Make both letters and information on

1 the Early Commitment to College program available on the Web  
2 site of the department and request all school districts to distribute  
3 the letters as appropriate through existing means to all pupils and  
4 their parents.

5 (g) In consultation with the Office of the Chancellor of the  
6 California Community College, representatives of the community  
7 college financial aid and business offices, and representatives of  
8 school districts, determine a mechanism through which pupils who  
9 have fulfilled the “Save Me a Spot in College” pledge requirements  
10 can be preapproved to receive, upon completion of high school, a  
11 fee waiver under the California Community College Board of  
12 Governor’s fee waiver program for two years of enrollment at a  
13 California community college.

14 54713. (a) A pupil who signs a pledge declares a commitment  
15 to prepare for college, finish high school, and enroll in college and  
16 commits to do all of the following:

17 (1) Meet all graduation requirements to finish high school in  
18 California.

19 (2) Enroll in college preparatory coursework, which may include  
20 A-G requirements and career technical coursework.

21 (3) Seek to achieve proficiency in mathematics and in reading  
22 and writing in English, as demonstrated on the California Standards  
23 Test or assessments of college-level proficiency.

24 (4) Complete and file a free application for federal student aid  
25 and submit his or her grade point average to the Student Aid  
26 Commission by March 2 of his or her senior year.

27 (5) Meet application and other requirements for university  
28 admission or enroll directly in community college in the academic  
29 year after high school graduation.

30 (b) At the time of enrollment, each pupil shall receive a  
31 certificate of participation in the Early Commitment to College  
32 program, with his or her name, and bearing the signature of the  
33 Superintendent, the local school district superintendent, and the  
34 Governor.

35 (c) Participating pupils also shall receive a booklet of college  
36 information providing more specific information about eligibility  
37 requirements, preparation steps, and other pertinent information.

38 (d) School districts shall provide information and services,  
39 through existing programs to pupils, not exclusive of those who  
40 sign the pledge, through their middle school and high school years.

1 These “Roadmap to College” services shall include all of the  
2 following:

3 (1) Transcript review and academics assessment, leading to  
4 course planning for the pupil at the time of enrollment in the Early  
5 Commitment to College program and annual reporting to the pupil  
6 on how he or she is doing relative to state standards and other  
7 benchmarks.

8 (2) Information about the Golden State Scholarshare College  
9 Savings Trust (Article 19 (commencing with Section 69980) of  
10 Chapter 2 of Part 42 of Division 5 of Title 3) at the time of  
11 enrollment.

12 (3) A visit to at least one community college, including, but not  
13 limited to, exposure to career technical and transfer programs, and  
14 at least one four-year college in grade 9 or 10.

15 (4) Information on college admissions tests in grade 11.

16 (5) Information on college admission and community college  
17 enrollment steps in grade 12.

18 (6) Information on the financial aid application process,  
19 including, but not limited to, the free application for federal student  
20 aid and grade point average verification, in grade 12.

21 (e) Pupils enrolled in an Early Commitment to College program  
22 who meet their pledge will be eligible to continue their  
23 postsecondary education at a California community college to  
24 pursue career technical education or a degree, or to transfer to a  
25 four-year university, or, if they meet the admission requirements  
26 and apply for admission, at the University of California or the  
27 California State University. Pupils who meet all the eligibility  
28 requirements of the Cal Grant Program (Article 3 (commencing  
29 with Section 69530) of Chapter 2 of Part 42 of Title 3) at the time  
30 of application will be eligible to receive a Cal Grant.

31 (f) (1) A pupil who signs the pledge and is certified as having  
32 fulfilled the requirements of the pledge pursuant to subdivision  
33 (b) of Section 54711 shall be preapproved to receive, upon  
34 completion of high school, a fee waiver under the California  
35 Community College Board of Governor’s fee waiver program for  
36 two years of enrollment at a California community college.

37 (2) *A pupil who has signed the pledge and transfers out of a*  
38 *participating school district shall not be preapproved for the fee*  
39 *waiver set forth in paragraph (1) unless he or she attends another*  
40 *school district that is participating in the program. The new school*

1 *district may obtain the pupil's record of participation in the*  
2 *program from the original school district or the pupil may request*  
3 *to sign the pledge again, including after grade 9, only if he or she*  
4 *provides documentation that he or she was enrolled in the program*  
5 *in his or her original school district.*

6 54714. (a) The Legislature encourages the California  
7 Community Colleges, the University of California, the California  
8 State University, independent colleges, the California Student  
9 Opportunity and Access Program, the Student Aid Commission,  
10 and other nonprofit, business, or other community organizations  
11 to provide support services as needed in coordination with school  
12 districts.

13 (b) Nothing in this article prohibits public and private colleges  
14 and universities from maintaining existing, or entering into new,  
15 supplemental agreements with school districts and their pupils to  
16 offer a guarantee of admission, supplemental services,  
17 supplemental financial aid, or other opportunities for alignment  
18 of prerequisites or curriculum.

19 54715. On or before November 1,—~~2016~~ 2018, the  
20 Superintendent shall submit to the Legislature a recommendation  
21 on whether the program should be continued.

22 54716. This article, as of January 1,—~~2018~~ 2020, is repealed,  
23 unless a later enacted statute, that becomes operative on or before  
24 January 1,—~~2018~~ 2020, deletes or extends that date.